

January 7

Zoe,

Glad to hear that you're feeling better about the situation. I'm not entirely sure what else to say about it, you know? So I'm not going to say anything. Please don't think that means I'm not listening when you tell me stuff. I want you to keep telling me what happens. I just feel like I've said all I can say on the matter. You know what I think about looking out for yourself, and it sounds like soon that's going to get really hard. I'm not saying don't help Lissa, just... I don't want you to get pushed to the bottom of the list just because you feel like your needs aren't as important as everyone else's.

Okay, I wasn't going to say anything else, I know, but one more thing. I don't know about you, but when I don't get enough me-time (or enough food, or enough sleep-- it doesn't take much with me) I get kind of cranky. If that happens to you, then you'll probably end up taking it out on someone else. You can take it out on me, sure, I don't mind too much. But what happens if you accidentally take it out on Lissa? She has done nothing (so far) to deserve that kind of treatment, and she's just a kid going through a lot right now. And we both know you wouldn't mean to lash out at her, but you still might, even if you've never lashed out at anyone before, because you haven't had to go through this kind of stress before. Yes, your mother had cancer but that was way before you were born. Living through someone dying is its own kind of special Hell.

Alright, really now, I'll shut up about it.

Sadly, everyone has gone home now, so it may be a while before I get replies to your messages. I'll pass them along, but the older ones

are all in school or working, and, well, honestly, do you really want more of the twins?

I'm glad you and Gabe are communicating better. I find it entertaining that Gabe and I are actually on the same side about this - you can't avoid it! Sometime Gabe and I really are going to have to have a little pow-wow on how to make you take care of yourself.

Oh Zoe, Emma is a girl, and she loves dances. I'm pretty sure I can handle a little girl talk. I'm glad you have something else to distract you, though I'm a little worried that you're already overbooked, and being on Prom Steering Committee is going to send you into a nervous breakdown.

Excuse me?! MY family thinks we're dating? Pot - meet kettle! Why do you think I dropped hints all over the past two letters asking what you told your family?! It's like, they know we're not together, but are determined to play matchmaker anyway.

I am not the one who started that problem on my end, I guarantee. I just told them that we'd been corresponding anonymously for a few months, and that's it. Probably it's just because I don't share much of my life with them at all. I mean, they know about Emma cause she's been over a few times, but I don't talk about any of my other friends... actually, our family doesn't talk too much at all. So, I guess, they figure if I'm telling them about you, you must be pretty important to me. Which is true, but doesn't automatically mean we're dating.

It's funny - I think I actually saw you about a week ago, coming in to drop off your letter. Just a glimpse, though. Someone came in and yelled at a "Zoe" for being slow, and I couldn't help but look up. I didn't

see enough to be sure, but I figured it was probably you (and I bet that was Gina right?) and I immediately got up to go to the bathroom. It's kind of an integrity thing. But the scissors picture is very cute. Alright, so is the grown up one, just, I can tell you were a cute kid. The photo I have included is one of the few non-required ones (you know, the yearly "sit-with-the-family-for-an-official portrait" which Dad always got to use in his advertising to prove he was a "family man" at least until the family got too big) I played soccer for a year before I decided running around after a ball wasn't that fun. I was hot and sweaty, but I had just scored my first goal. I think my babysitter/nanny took it. And just to be fair, I've included my yearbook photo from last fall. Those pictures almost always suck, but it's that or scanning my driver's license and everyone looks stoned in those.

This letter seems really short. What else should I tell you about? Oh! School started again. Classes are fine, I guess. None of them are outstanding, but they're all at least tolerable.

Ah, and here's a bit of the normal kind of drama - Emma has a new boyfriend! Again. (Here you'll have to imagine me rolling my eyes.) He's actually not a Douchy McDouche-face this time, or at least he doesn't seem like it. I don't like him, sure, but he's a lot better than most of the guys she's dated. He sat with us at lunch today, and he and Emma both actually ate instead of sucking face the whole time, so that's a definite improvement.

Yeah, I'm finding I really don't want to talk about that either.

What else, what else? Ah, Elisabeth. Since you love her so much (remotely) you'd like updates right? Oh, I know! I'll send you a picture. For all she keeps me up at night and drives me insane, she is kind of

adorable. And, get this, she actually likes me. Well, I think. She stops crying if I pick her up. Every time I pick her up. It's getting to a point where even Rachel will call me to come take her when she can't get her to sleep, and I'll be holding her for maybe ten minutes and she'll be completely out. It's kind of nice, actually. The weight of holding her is really soothing. Sometimes I'll just sit and hold her in front of the tv not even paying attention to what's on.

Okay, I've dragged this out long enough. We've gone from too much drama all the way back around to not even enough to talk about. Even though I like writing to you, I would be perfectly happy for it to stay this way for a while.

Your Friend,
Alex